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Dean Talks Of Parleys With Nixon

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

N. Y. Times News Service

Washington—John W. Dean 3d has told the Senate Watergate committee chief counsel that he met alone and in small groups with President Nixon more than 40 times between late January and early April of this year, sources close to the case said yesterday.

Dean, the former White House counsel, said this, according to the sources, during a more than four-hour private conference with Samuel Dash, the committee's chief counsel.

In that conference Dean said he could supply first-hand testimony about those meetings that he believed would show that Mr. Nixon had a "substantial knowledge" of what high White House officials were doing about the Watergate investigation, one source said.

'Great Interest'

Dean also told Dash, this source said, that the President showed a "great interest" in making sure that "things were handled right—taken care of."

The White House, at first refused to discuss the report that Dean had met far more frequently than previously known with Mr. Nixon. But later Gerald L. Warren, the deputy press secretary to the President, called and volunteered the following statement:

"This story and a similar story to be carried in tomorrow's Washington Post appear to be part of a careful, coordinated strategy by an individual, or individuals, determined to prosecute a case against the President in the press, using innuendo, distortion of fact and outright falsehood.

"This manipulation of the press involves an unprecedented assault on judicial and administrative due process. Its objective, stated in the simplest terms, is to destroy the President. We categorically deny the assertions and implications of this story."

Crucial to Decision

It was the conference with Dash, one source said, that prompted the Senate Watergate Committee to seek immunity from prosecution for Dean in return for his testimony during a public hearing.

Dean and his associates earlier had been quoted as saying that he had little contact with Mr. Nixon during the period between June 17, 1972, the date of the Watergate break-in, and Aug. 29, when Mr. Nixon publicly announced that the White House counsel had

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assured him in a report that no one "presently employed by this Administration" had been involved in Watergate.

White House officials have since acknowledged that the only Watergate report received last year by Mr. Nixon was an informal oral report from John D. Ehrlichman, then the President's chief domestic adviser.

No Specifics

The Times' source said that during Dean's meeting with Dash, Dean did not discuss any specific conversations he held with Mr. Nixon because of unresolved questions about national security and executive privilege.

Dash was told, the source said, that Dean met only 10 times with the President between July, 1970, when he was named White House counsel, and early 1973. Over the next three months, however, the source said, as the possibility of further disclosures about Watergate became more threatening, Dean began meeting "frequently" with the President, both with small groups and alone.